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ABSTRACT

Presented is a model plan for inservice training of professional personnel who work with gifted and talented children in Connecticut. Discussed are such aspects as basic philosophical assumptions regarding the use of human resources, teaching strategies, and background knowledge; and the design and implementation of inservice training programs (including needs assessment, evaluation, and coordination). An instrument to aid local school districts in evaluating current and proposed inservice training programs is described, and an explanatory chart and sample assessment forms are provided. (LH)

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IN-SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAM MODEL FOR PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL IN THE EDUCATION OF THE GIFTED AND TALENTED

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CONNECTICUT'S IN-SERVICE TRAINING MODEL FOR PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL IN THE EDUCATION OF THE GIFTED AND TALENTED

PART I

Philosophy

The local school district is organized on the basis of a series of processes, sub-systems and operations. Each component of the school district deserves its share of resources such as time, people and funds. As you know, most decisions related to the setting of priorities among these components place "people" and "things" in competition for the scarcity of "time" and "resources." The greatest need is too often placed in the "things" category.

When we discuss in-service training for any educational component (general education, special education, etc.), we are talking about a "people" activity. The basic belief and the true concern should be for continuing education of all professional personnel involved in the education of children and youth at the school district level. The expectations for professional performance by staff are highly related to pre-service and graduate study by the administrative and supervisory staffs. Such components of professional training should be considered as minimal expectancies for professionals involved in the education of the gifted and talented. The local school districts frequently expand their instructional programs, add facilities and increase resources. As these extensions and expansions occur, they create or impose new expectations on instructional and ancillary staff for positive performance. A positive school district should, therefore, provide opportunities for a number of alternatives for continued professional growth for those who work with gifted and talented children and youth.

The total time, human and financial resources provided by the school district

for such professional orientation, preparation and in-service training will directly reflect the districts' concern for professional growth and the process that brings about change to effect the needs of the gifted and talented. Commitment to improved in-service training can best be reached when

1. the district recognizes it as part of the total educational structure
2. the participants are involved in the planning and implementation
3. the district assigns an equalizing priority to it with other components of the educational plan.

Basic Assumptions

When a school district develops a philosophy relative to in-service training for the gifted and talented, operational guidelines must be developed in order to have such a philosophy effectively function.

These guidelines may take the form of assumptions which are pertinent to four variable components relative to the concept of in-service training; namely, 1) human resources, 2) strategies, 3) content areas, 4) fiscal resources, and 5) the processes related to in-service training for the gifted and talented.

1. Human Resources
   a. All target groups (Board of Education, community, administration, etc.) should have the development of professional competency in this area as a top priority.
   b. Commitment to improvement is related to participation in the design of such improvement.
   c. The local school district has a responsibility to provide for professional growth of its total staff to effect change among special groups of children and youth.
   d. Morale is related to competency and commitment.

2. Strategies-Instruction

   a. Strategies for and approaches to differentiated instruction and thinking are constantly changing.

   b. Recognition of individual differences demands utilization of a variety of differentiated teaching strategies.

3. Content

   a. Information and knowledge are constantly being changed, reworded, or refined.

   b. Responsible relationships with pupils and adults requires familiarity with appropriate bodies of information and knowledge.

4. Processes-In-Service

   a. School districts must determine that in-service training for the gifted and talented is a high priority of their program support system.

   b. The resource of time must be provided within which appropriate in-service activities can occur.

   c. Human and fiscal resources are essential to any well developed in-service program.

   d. Expertise required to:

      a. analyze a situation

      b. design and develop a program

      c. implement the prescribed program and evaluate the results gained

   e. School districts should be provided by the State Agency with models, professional assistance and resources to help establish priorities and needs for in-service education.

PART II

PROCESSES OF IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR THE GIFTED AND TALENTED

The various processes of in-service training for the gifted and talented describe those functions which must be performed in order to assess, design, develop and implement a successful training program. The design and implementation of these processes may be carried out in various ways, approaches, directions and by various clusters of target groups of those to participate in the training.

These processes are defined in the following manner:

1. Assessment of Needs — assess the current status of a school district in relation to the specifics of education of the gifted and talented.
2. Prescriptive — Review the data gathered and then make selection of appropriate strategies which will initiate desired changes in staff.
3. Evaluation — appraisal which relates to the degree of success attained by the in-service program. Therefore, it is obvious that specific objectives of the training program, as well as written outcomes for professional personnel, are essential first steps to any productive evaluation.
4. Interventions — activities which reflect incorporation of various changes in objectives needs or outcomes. A continuous flow and utilization of feedback determines the effective utilization of proposed activities.

The local school district should assume primary responsibility for:

1. assessing its in-service needs relative to the education of the gifted and talented.

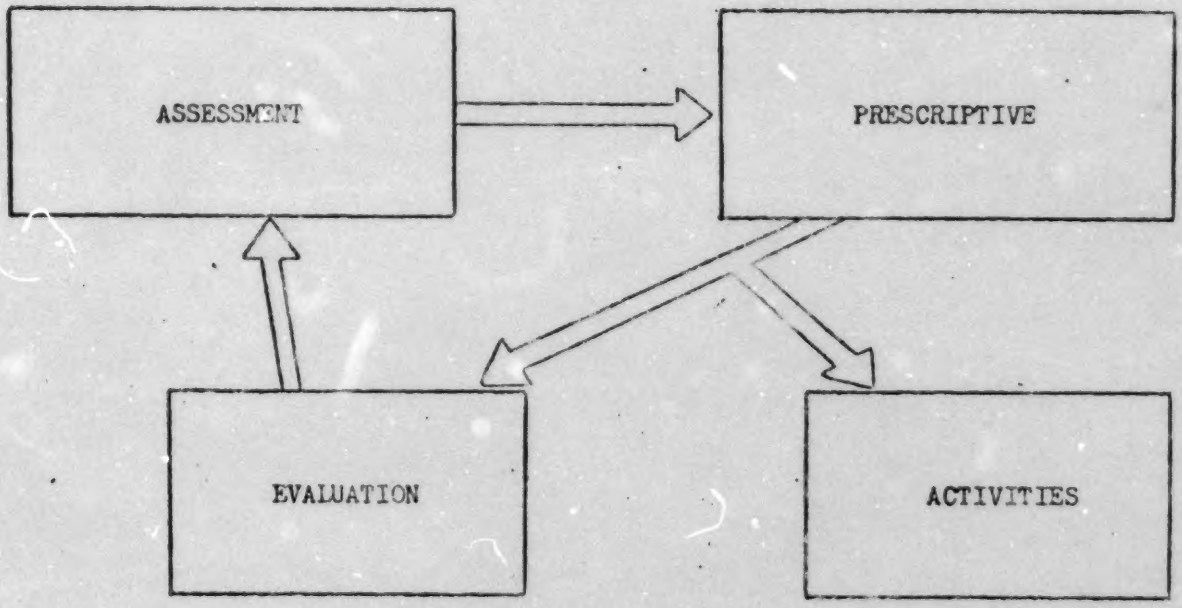
2. initiating contact with various human resources who have the capability of providing interventions to effect their needs.
3. developing the goals and objectives for the gifted and talented in-service training program in their school districts.
4. specifying the outcomes they anticipate for the participants in the process.
5. identifying the follow-through aspects as this relates to time, personnel and resources.

The state education agency should assume the responsibility of:

1. providing a schema to assist the local school districts with the necessary technical assistance needed to develop the training program.
2. providing a clearinghouse where the districts may obtain information relative to accessability of professional expertise needed to conduct training programs.
3. coordinating state-wide and regional workshops and institutes to demonstrate how school districts may train personnel in the education of the gifted and talented at various levels of training.
4. maintaining a continual assessment as to the needs of training in the various local school district.

MODEL A

PROCESSES OF IN-SERVICE TRAINING



PART III

THREE SIDES OF IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR THE GIFTED AND TALENTED

This instrument is designed to assist local school districts in the evaluation of in-service training programs for the education of the gifted and talented by:

1. assessing the present status of educational programs for the gifted and talented and specifically the component of in-service training.
2. identifying directions for future programs through in-service training for professional staff and others involved with the gifted and talented.
3. developing the components necessary for the desired outcomes.

Section A of this instrument is generally related to the assessment of current programming for the gifted and talented and specifically to the in-service component of such programming. Section B concerns itself with focusing on proposed programs for in-service in the gifted and talented. These anticipated programs will be specifically related to the various (3) sides of in-service training (See Model B). This model depicts in graphic form a three sided approach to in-service training as a key component of a gifted and talented program. A local school district, after assessing the current status of its educational program for the gifted and talented and of the in-service component, would determine which target group(s) or specific components of the program need special attention. A choice would then be made incorporating characteristics from each of the three sides of the model.

For example, the model could be utilized in the following manner: the school district reveals a need for in-servicing specific components of a gifted and talented program. The three sides of the model are then employed:

1. Side I - - explore possibilities for in-service programs related to one or more target groups of gifted and talented children and youth.
2. Side II - - the specific target group of teachers and supervisors are at the orientation level. Expectations for personnel at this time are minimal. Basic information is needed for both the teachers and administrators.
3. Side III - - the specific content areas to be covered at these orientation sessions might relate to:
   a. need(s) for program
   b. review of research
   c. definition of target group(s)
   d. screening and identification

Briefly, this instrument is designed to assist those decision-makers in the school districts and the State Education Agency in designing and developing an individualized approach to the in-service training component of a total program for the gifted and talented. To do this requires:

1. an assessment of the current status of educational programs and of in-service training;
2. diagnosis based on assessment;
3. prescribing in-service based on diagnosis and desired outcomes;
4. stating anticipated outcomes;
5. indicating specific commitment to the on-going process as well as follow-up.

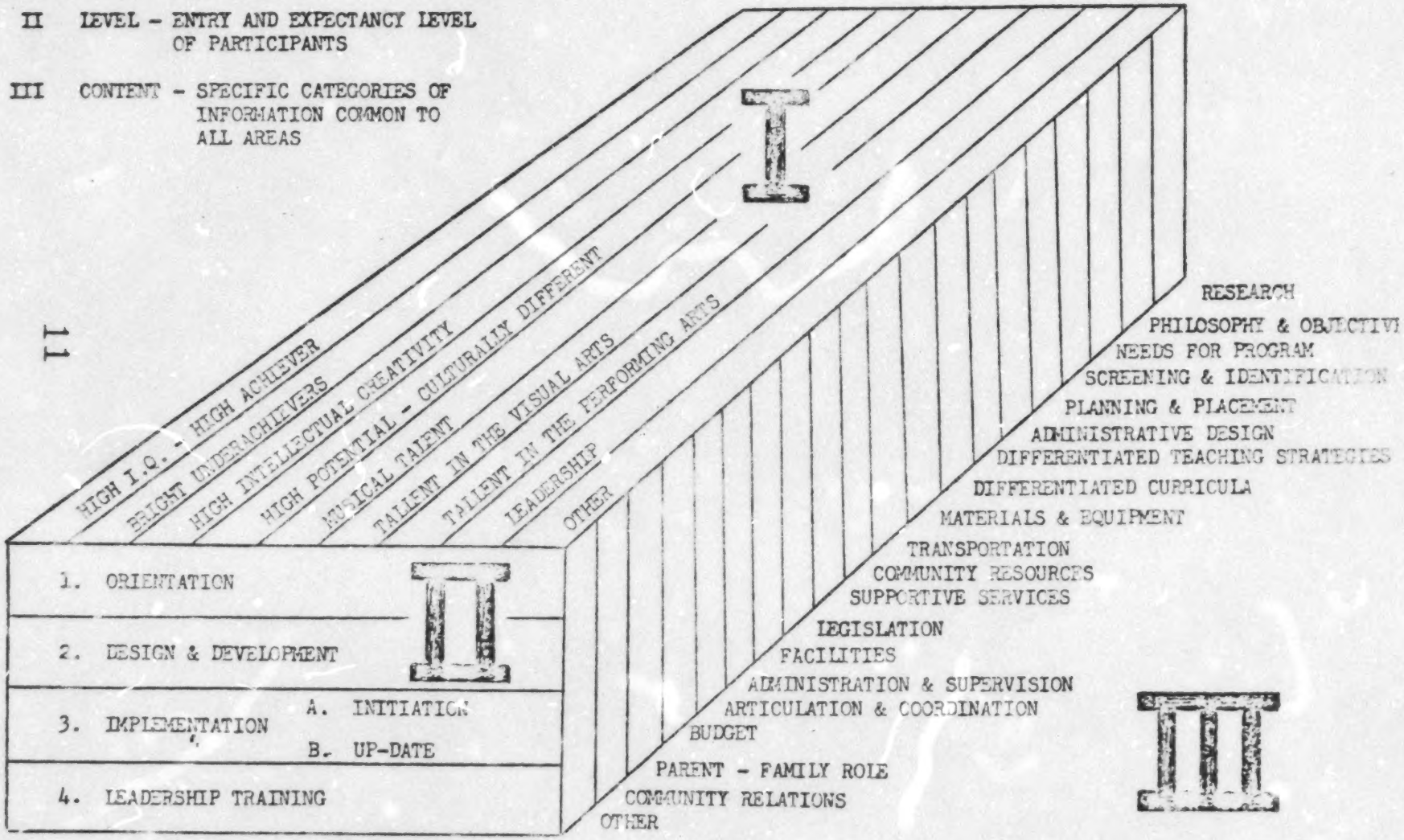
Both sections of this instrument must be completed. The future success of the in-service component of a total educational program for the gifted and talented will relate in a major part to the precise, accurate completion of this instrument.

THREE DIMENSIONS OF IN-SERVICE EDUCATION

I AREA(S) OF GIFTED & TALENTED

II LEVEL - ENTRY AND EXPECTANCY LEVEL OF PARTICIPANTS

III CONTENT - SPECIFIC CATEGORIES OF INFORMATION COMMON TO ALL AREAS



SECTION A

(To be completed by school district)

A. Philosophy

1. Does your school district have a written policy relative to:

	Yes or No
a. in-service education	_____
b. travel	_____
c. conferences, conventions, workshop attendance	_____

2. Does your district use in-service education as an integral part of a total program design:

a. always	_____
b. sometimes	_____
c. rarely	_____
d. never	_____

COMMENTS:

B. Time

Does your district provide time for in-service education:

a. regular basis (one day a month, week, etc.)	_____
b. occassionally for special programs	_____
c. as part of orientation programs	_____
d. summer	_____
e. other	_____

COMMENTS:

C. Support

1. In-service education is supported by:

a. granting credits which are applicable to salary increments _____

b. released time _____

c. financial assistance as per contract _____

d. summer work arrangement _____

e. other _____

COMMENTS:

2. Is there a specific budget allocation in your district for in-service education (speakers, travel, etc.)

a. Yes ____

b. No ____

COMMENTS:

D. Professional Staff

1. Involvement

a. To what degree are teachers involved in developing in-service programs.

1. always _____

2. sometimes _____

3. rarely _____

4. never _____

COMMENTS:

2. Selection

   a. voluntary _____

   b. appointed _____

      1. administrator _____

      2. teachers associations _____

      3. combination (1 and 2) _____

      4. other _____

COMMENTS:

SECTION B
(Refers to Model II)

Side I - - Areas of the Gifted and Talented

The following target group(s) of gifted and talented children and youth are in need of in-service program development:

a. High I.Q. - High Achiever ____

b. Bright Underachiever ____

c. High Intellectual Creativity ____

d. High Potential - Culturally Different ____

e. Musical Talent ____

f. Talent in the Visual Arts ____

g. Talent in the Performing Arts ____

h. Leadership ____

i. Other _____ ____

_____ ____

Side II - - Entry and Expectancy

A. Entry Point

1. Public(s)

The development of in-service programs should reflect participation of:

a. Board of Education ____

b. Administration ____

c. Teachers ____

d. Ancillary Staff ____

e. Parents ____

f. Combination (please specify) ____

_____ ____

_____ ____

G. Others (please specify) ____

_____ ____

_____ ____

2. The designing of in-service should reflect the current status of the public. The group(s) identified in A-1 is at the following level of entry:

a. Orientation for program ____

b. Design and Development of a program ____

c. Implementation of a program ____

1. initiation ____

2. expansion and/or update ____

d. Leadership training ____

B. Expectancy

State in specifics what is expected of the group(s) at the completion of the in-service process.

1. The statements should reflect responses given in A-1 and A-2 and should be stated in behavioral terms.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Side III - - CONTENT

Please check the content components which should be included in the in-service program:

a. Research ____
b. Philosophy and Objectives ____
c. Needs for Program ____
d. Screening and Identification ____
e. Planning and Placement ____
f. Administrative Design ____
g. Differentiated Teaching Strategies ____
h. Differentiated Curricula ____
i. Materials and Equipment ____
j. Transportation ____
k. Community Resources ____
l. Supportive Services ____
m. Legislation ____
n. Facilities ____
o. Administration and Supervision ____
p. Articulation and Coordination ____
q. Budget ____
r. Parent-Family Role ____
s. Community Relations ____
t. Other ____